DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL DISTANCE LEARNING CLASS

1. **Who is your primary student group or audience?**
    a. Know who your students are.
    b. Adult students vs. high school students.
    c. Student information may be collected in a variety of ways.
    d. Student lounge, bulletin board.
    e. Questions.
    f. Telephone calls.
    g. Draw on student's experiences in the class program
2. **What do you want students to learn?**
    a. Identify class, overall objectives, or outcomes and show this upfront to the students.
    b. Identify specific objectives and share them.
        i. Content.
        ii. Workplace skills.
        iii. Cross disciplinary skills
        iv. Prerequisite skills may need to review concepts.
    c. Content objectives or learning outcomes relate to specifics that you expect students to learn as they work through the course concepts.
        i. Action oriented, clearly tied to objectives.
        ii. Workplace skills.
    d. Distance learning students respond well to integrated learning. Instructors are developing cross-disciplinary objectives.
        i. Life is cross-disciplinary.
        ii. Student experiences.
    e. The heterogeneity of background and preparation of students may necessitate objectives related to review of concepts.
        i. FAQ's.
        ii. Emails.
        iii. Support Services.
        iv. Asynchronous activities.
3. **Why will students enroll in your course?**
    a. Most important—Access, Time, and Flexibility.
    b. Opportunity to collaborate with others.
    c. Geographical isolation—too far from the nearest college or university, or high school.
    d. Student backgrounds and interests.
4. How are you planning to deliver your course?
    a. Consider what types of learning activities are needed at a distance so students can accomplish the objectives you have identified.
    b. The learning activities may determine what technology tools are best suited to "deliver" that activity. See "the Matrix" at http://www.uacte.org/matrix/
        i. Teamwork activities or group collaboration.

ii. Communication and interaction.
iii. Sharing activities.
iv. Problem solving—open ended discussions.
v. Applications of learning assessments.

c. Synchronous options require that students get together, either virtually or in the same location at the same time.
   i. How will students get together?
   ii. Chat sessions.
   iii. Videoconferencing after class.
   iv. At the beginning of class, middle, end of course.
   v. Will telephone, emails, faxing be required?
d. Asynchronous options provide greater flexibility and independence for the student. Very attractive to adult learners.
   i. Threaded discussions.
   ii. Virtual bulletin boards.
   iii. Email, voicemails, fax.
   iv. Printed material.
   v. Web or online assignments and postings
e. Effective course delivery will provide time for content, communication, and assessment. Not "What is best?" But, "What works most effectively for student learning?"

5. What academic resources are needed for student success?

a. Student resources that match your learning objectives and that provide a range of options for students.
b. Some resources that are easily found in the classroom, campus, or library will provide a significant challenge for delivery at a distance.
c. Be sure students know up-front what technical requirements are needed.
d. Because of the wide range of resources that are available, distance learning students will need help in evaluating the resources they find. Just because they find it on Google, doesn't mean it is good!"

6. What outcomes will indicate student success?

a. The actual types of outcome that you plan will relate again to the objectives you establish.
b. Students taking a distance learning course need to know clearly and specifically what constitutes successful outcomes.
c. Be clear about what to do and how to do it, early on in your class.
d. Clarify all aspects of the course. Directions, expectations, objectives, requirements, timeline, criteria for success.
e. Develop an F.A.Q. for students
   i. Questions about the syllabus.
   ii. Requirements for the course.
f. Provide students with hints for success.

g. Stay in touch with the group as a whole and with individual students.
h. Communicate individually at least once a week.
i. Let students know how quickly you will respond.
j. Build interaction into the class.
    i. With instructors, each other, groups, outside resources, course materials.
    ii. Build opportunities to work together.
k. Planning for daily classes. "Don't wing it!"
    i. Plan for variations of quality and quality of resources. Are there alternatives for students to use?
    ii. Include information about how to succeed with the technology.
    iii. Develop content in modules.
    iv. Employ strategies that save you time.
l. Anticipate questions, FAQ's
m. Email addresses should be clear and tagged with contact information.
n. Arrange for students to critique others' work and work collaboratively before coming to you.
o. Use threaded discussion to keep class focused on learning objectives and outcomes.
p. Provide students with multiple opportunities for assessment.
    i. Group and individual assessment opportunities.
    ii. Leverage the technology in the assessment process. (E.g. automated grading of quizzes, grade book with scores, etc.)
    iii. Provide opportunities for students to creatively evaluate the course program frequently.

7. Getting started with your distance learning class.

a. Develop curriculum for class. May be the same as for traditional class.
b. Make major resource choices that support your initial learning and information acquisition.
c. Determine if you need specific software/hardware to complement your videoconferencing class. Blended learning is synchronous classroom presentation tied together with asynchronous activities, typically an online, virtual class that contains all aspects of your course in electronic format.
d. Practice, practice, practice using your technology. Become very familiar with all parts of the technology and troubleshooting aspects of using it.
e. Investigate what learning activities are available. Don't recreate the wheel!
f. Build your course.
g. Be sure to clearly identify the guiding principles of your class.
h. Focus on the fundamentals.
i. Make sure information is as clear as possible—plan on students misunderstanding what is required.
j. Know who your students are. Seating charts, biographies, etc.
k. Develop your course content in modules.
l. Consider a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities.

m. Whenever possible develop audio and video files for student viewing/listening at a later time.
n. Use multiple levels of evaluation.
o. Include frequent opportunities for communication.

8. Ten proven technology models of distance learning.

a. Computer based instruction (Asynchronous)
b. Computer conferencing.
c. On-line and web based instruction.
d. Desktop collaboration, sharing of files, multimedia software materials.
e. Broadcast television instruction. Simplex communication (one-way).
f. Audio conferencing and audiographic telecommunications.
g. Videoconferencing. Interactive Video Conference (IVC—Ednet).
h. 2-way VSAT (satellite communication systems).
i. Multimedia conferencing. (Net meeting, Skype, Desktop conferencing).
j. Full motion, 2-way video and audio (Fiber optic teleconferencing).

9. Lessons learned in distance learning.

a. Good teaching is good teaching.
b. Technology as a "replication of a class" is a waste of resources. Distance learning technology provides for unique technology delivery and interaction in class. Avoid the "talking head!"
c. The best technology cannot improve on inferior delivery.
d. Cost recovery is a viable objective, but should not be the sole means of judging the quality and effectiveness of distance learning.
e. Can vendors provide solutions? Yes, but it pays to mix technologies.
f. Effective technology provides choices and flexibility in quality content and effective learning.
g. Reward the risk takers.

10. Resources for Distance Learning.

a. Utah Core Curriculum… http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/core/
b. The Matrix… http://www.uacte.org/matrix/
c. Distance Learning Training—USOE… http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/ednet/training/default.html
d. Distance Learning at Utah Education Network (UEN)… http://www.uen.org/distance_ed/
e. Utah Education Network… http://www.uen.org/
f. Distance Education Catalog… http://www.uen.org/decatalog/basic.jsp
g. Utah Electronic College... https://www.uec.org/catalog/index.html
h. Utah Electronic High School… http://ehs.uen.org/?bbatt=Y
i. Distance education newsletter… http://www.uen.org/News/news_group.cgi?category_id=6
j. United States Distance Learning Association… http://www.usdla.org/
k. The American Journal of Distance Education… http://www.ajde.com/index.htm

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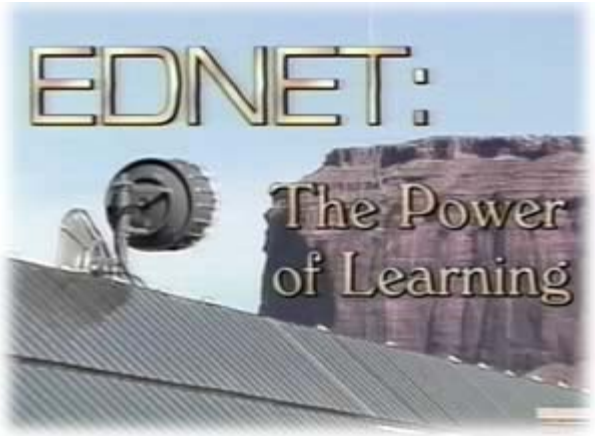
l. Utah Concurrent Enrollment Website…
http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/concuren/default.htm
m. Search for a current class in IView (Utah)…
http://www.uen.org/curriculum/dlcatalog.shtml
n. Register or Login into MyUEN…
http://my.uen.org/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=PUB.1001.1
o. USOE Distance Education Training Specialist…
    i. George T. W. Miller Jr.
    ii. 801-538-7790
    iii. George.miller@schools.utah.gov



http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/ednet/training/materials/preparing.html